Amendments to the Claims:

This listing of claims will replace all prior versions, and listings, of claims in the application:

Listing of Claims:

1. (currently amended):   A method of validating an identity of a user using a pointing device comprising the steps of:

providing data for the display of ~~displaying~~ a background image,

providing data for positioning at least one object on said background image,

~~operating said pointing device to provide data relative to said background image,~~

receiving a sampled pointing device (PD) signature including a set of position vectors, said PD signature generated by sampling a plurality of events corresponding to positions of a ~~said~~ cursor while ~~performing said step of~~ operating said pointing device to provide data relative to said background image ~~to provide a sampled pointing device (PD) signature including a set of position vectors,~~

comparing said sampled PD signature to a stored PD signature representing the identity of the user, and

validating said identity of said user in response to said comparing step.

2. (currently amended):   The method of claim 1 wherein ~~said step of operating includes~~ moving said PD ~~to manipulate a~~ manipulates said cursor on said background image.

3. (currently amended):   The method of claim 2 wherein ~~said step of operating said pointing device~~ operating said PD includes moving a mouse.

4. (currently amended): The method of claim 1 wherein said ~~PD signature~~ <u>PD signature</u> ~~step of sampling a plurality of events~~ includes <u>data generated by</u> clicking of said pointing device.

5. (currently amended): The method of claim 1 wherein said ~~step of~~ sampling <u>of</u> a plurality of events includes a drag and drop event by said pointing device.

6. (currently amended): The method of claim 1 wherein said sampling <u>of</u> a plurality of events includes sampling a time component.

7. (currently amended): The method of claim 1 wherein said step of comparing includes applying a set of ~~agents~~ <u>nodes</u> to analyze said sample signature and determining if said sample signature satisfies a threshold matching criteria.

8. (currently amended): The method of claim 1 further comprising the steps of:

receiving a plurality of signature exemplars; and

creating a set of ~~agents~~ <u>nodes</u> associated with said exemplars.

9. (currently amended): The method of claim 1 wherein ~~said step of~~ displaying said background image includes displaying a graphic.

10. (currently amended): The method of claim 1 wherein ~~said step of~~ operating said pointing device includes positioning said cursor relative to said objects.

11. (currently amended): The method of claim 1 wherein ~~said step of~~ operating said pointing device includes positioning a draggable icon on said background image.

12. (original): The method of claim 1 wherein said step of sampling a plurality of events includes sampling horizontal and vertical positions of said cursor and a time parameter associated with respective ones of said events.

13. (original): The method of claim 1 wherein said step of sampling a plurality of events includes sampling a mode of said input device.

14. (original): The method of claim 13 wherein said step of sampling a mode of said input device includes a step of sampling a normal mode, a "drag and drop" mode, or a click mode of said input device.

15. (currently amended)   The method of claim 1 wherein said ~~step of~~ PD signature is generated by processing said set of position ~~vector~~ vectors including ~~to provide signature characteristics includes a step of~~ processing a series of said events using a plurality of ~~agents~~ nodes.

16. (original): The method of claim 1 further comprising a step of:

receiving a verification request from a provider; and

issuing in response to said step of validating, an authorization message to said provider.

17. (currently amended)   A software system stored on a computer readable medium for validating a user's identity comprising software configured to perform the steps of:

providing data for the display of ~~displaying~~ an object map to a user;

receiving data representing signature characteristics generated by processing a set of position vectors resulting from user manipulation of a cursor using ~~a signal from~~ an input device

manipulated by a user; to provide a sample of sampling a plurality of events corresponding to positions of said cursor so as to further provide a sampled signature including [[a]] said set of position vectors;

processing said position vectors to provide signature characteristics;

comparing said signature characteristics to characteristics of a stored signature representing the user's identity;

validating said user's identity in response to said comparing step.

18. (currently amended): The software system on a computer readable medium of claim 17 wherein said step of operating includes moving using said PD to manipulate a manipulates said cursor on said a background image.

19. (currently amended): The software system on a computer readable medium of claim 18 wherein said step of operating using said pointing device includes moving a mouse.

Claims 20 – 32 (cancelled)

33. (currently amended): A verification server for use in a signature recognition system comprising: including a user computer system including having a pointing device and a display screen, said the user computer system operational to (i) display a virtual pad on said display screen, (ii) respond to a positioning of said pointing device to position a cursor on said virtual pad, and (iii) provide a collection of vectors describing an operation of said pointing device with respect to said cursor; and said verification server comprising:

a verification server an interface in communication with said user computer system for receiving said collection of vectors, and

a signature recognition engine configured to (i) process ~~processing~~ said vectors, ~~comparing~~ (ii) compare said processed vectors to exemplar signature data and, in response, ~~providing~~ (iii) provide signature recognition data.

Claims 34 – 48 (cancelled)